

1708

INDUSTRY, and a PIOUS SUBMISSION, CHARITY, and a STRICT
ECONOMY, recommended and enforced, as the best means of allevi-
ating the present distress.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH

OF

St. ANNE, WESTMINSTER,

ON

SUNDAY, the 14th, Day of DECEMBER, 1800,

BEING

THE DAY ON WHICH

HIS MAJESTY's PROCLAMATION,

On the SCARCITY of GRAIN,

was directed to be read.

BY JOS. JEFFERSON, A. M. & F. A. S.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THAT the few following Pages contain nothing to attract the attention of the learned, that they only revive sentiments, which have been often, as well, or better, expressed, the Author is perfectly aware. It does not follow, however, that trite sentiments, renewed on particular occasions, and under particular circumstances, may not appear in a fresh and more forcible light, and have, to the full, as good an effect upon the mind, as any of those novel ideas, which it is a fashion, perhaps not the least dangerous of the present day, to pursue and admire. Should the Author, therefore, appear less original, than some of his Readers might expect, he does not take much blame to himself on this account. It is hoped, that this discourse, published principally with a view to give it circulation amongst those, to whom it was delivered, and for whose spiritual and temporal interests, from a sense of gratitude and friendship, as well as of duty and affection, the Author professes the sincerest regard,—It is hoped, that by THEM, at least, it will be read, not only with candour; but with a sufficient attention to give it a fair chance of influencing the heart;—and should it be the means of making one poor Man more patient and happy, one rich Man more frugal and benevolent, or one indifferent Man more zealous for his Country's good, under the pressure of the present times, the Author will feel ample compensation for all risk of criticism, and think his pains well repaid.

A

DEDICATION.

УДАРЫ СИЛЫ

DEPICTION

DEDICATION.

TO THE

REV. STEPHEN EATON,

A. M. F. R. & A. S. Archdeacon of Middlesex, and Rector of St. Anne,
WESTMINSTER.

SHOULD I look higher than to you, my dear Sir, for patronage for this Sermon, on submitting it to the eyes of the world, I should neither do it justice, nor gratify the sentiments of my own heart. It was written at your request—it was preached to a Congregation, who, with one voice, own it to be their greatest blessing, that you have presided over them for almost twenty years, and it's object is our Country's welfare, and the comfort and relief of the Poor.—None therefore, but those, who are totally ignorant of your character, can suppose, that it will fail to meet with your approbation and regard.

THAT it may be the happiness of your flock, to see you soon restored to your pastoral duties, that the numerous charitable Institutions, of which you are a Member, may soon have again the benefit of your able and active aid, and that I may enjoy to the latest

age

age, that friendship, which has, for so many Years, had my most implicit confidence,—which has been the sweetner of my professional labours, when, in this populous Parish, they have been the most fatiguing and severe, and which has constituted no trifling portion of the general comforts of my life, is the sincere and fervent Prayer of

your faithful and obedient Servant,

*Soho-Square,
Dec. 18th, 1800.*

The AUTHOR.

A SERMON,

SERMON, &c.

JOHN, vi. 5.

**HE SAITH UNTO PHILIP, WHENCE SHALL WE BUY BREAD
THAT THESE MAY EAT?**

IT was by the merciful interposition of God, that we first breathed and lived. It is by the same kind and providential care, that we enjoy life and breath. He alone gives being. He alone affords what is necessary to sustain it. By his power the clouds drop rain. By his bounty the earth brings forth fruit in its season. Not one plant, that is planted, not one seed, that is sown, can grow but by his permission. In the elegant and emphatical words of the Psalmist, "He watereth the hills from his chambers—The earth is satisfied with the fruit of his works."

" works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man." These self-evident truths, acknowledged from age to age, and which ought the more to interest our affections, the more certainly they are ascertained, are commonly passed over as trite remarks, and but rarely rest long enough upon the mind to enable us to define their import; much less to excite, as they justly ought, our gratitude and praise. Even the great Orb of light and life itself, displays it's majesty and splendor to a regardless eye, only because the blessing of it's influence is day by day shed upon the world.

To pry, with an unavailing much more with an irreverent curiosity, into the counsels of God, to attempt, with a daring hand, to draw aside the veil, that overshadows the dispensations of the Almighty, is a conduct little adapted to the frailty, less to the sinfulness of man. But it may, I trust, be supposed without presumption, that when God deranges the usual order of his bounty, and bestows, with a sparing, what is usually given with a profuse hand,—it may be amongst his designs, the severest of which, we know, are tempered with wisdom, to draw our attention to these truths, so as to enforce religion and piety.—To teach us by his judgements, what we have refused to learn by his mercies.

Be this as it may, I trust, the miracle suggested to our consideration, by my text, may serve to enliven, by new circumstances of representation, our obligations to God for daily food, and may recommend to us

us that conduct, which our present afflictive circumstances imperiously demand, and which, by a Prince equally distinguished by his reverence for his God, and by his love for his People, we have just been enjoined to practice. It is an axiom universally allowed, that second causes detract not from the sufficiency of the first; yet, to the reproach of the human understanding, they are apt to obscure it. That a plentiful, or parsimonious, return of the seed sown, is the consequence of mild and propitious, or of untoward and uncongenial seasons, is the universal language of Mankind, and were a language more harmless, were not the mind too often led to rest here,—were it not by these mere instruments of an all-powerful Hand checked in its flight to heaven; were it not by them prevented from soaring to that God to whom blight and mildew, hail and rain, fire and tempest, bow down and obey. In the miracle before us, our Lord acts without intermediate causes. He produces food by one effort of his creative Hand, and proves at once, to whom we owe it.

It appears that five thousand Men, attracted by the doctrines and miracles of Christ, had gathered round him in the wilderness. An entire absorption by those momentous truths, that fell from his lips, had made them inattentive even to the urgent and necessary demands of natural appetite. Hungering and thirsting only for more of his divine instruction, desiring that bread only, which endureth to eternal life, they were so lost in the perfection, as to forget the infirmity of nature. Elevated by the contemplation of spiritual bliss, they were forgetful of the imbecility of our corporeal organs, and drew upon themselves

themselves that eye of Providence, which nothing can intercept ; which is not less watchful, because our faculties are asleep. For by another Evangelist, we are told, that Jesus “ called his Disciples unto “ him, and said, I have compassion on the Multitude, because they “ continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat, and I “ will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way. And “ his Disciples say unto him, whence should we have so much in “ in the wilderness, as to fill so great a Multitude.” The place, where they were, was barren and fruitless ; but He, who “ openeth “ his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness,” was there. He was there, in whom, and by whom all things were, and are created. All surrounding Nature felt the presence of Him, “ who maketh a “ fruitful land barren for the wickedness of them, that dwell therein,” or, “ again maketh the wilderness a standing water, and water “ springs of a dry ground,” that the righteous may “ plant them “ vineyards to yield them fruits of increase.” All Nature felt the presence of Him, who maketh the fields “ multiply exceedingly, and “ suffereth not the cattle to decrease.” Five barley loaves and two small fishes, were all, that could be procured for this great Multitude. For these, our Saviour, shewing us, that we ought to be grateful for the least of God’s bounties,—for these, he gave thanks, and to enforce upon us the conviction, that gratitude to God for the least, is the most immediate means of drawing down the greatest of his favours. He instantly distributed to his Disciples, and his Disciples to the Multitude, and they did all eat and were filled. Dealt out by the confiding and charitable hand of the Widow of Zarephath, the
“ barrel

" barrel of meal did not waste, nor the cruse of oil fail," which was to sustain the Prophet " till the Lord should send rain upon the earth."—Distributed by the hands of the Disciples, believing and assured, that he, who gave was the Son of God, the " five barley loaves, and the two small fishes," did not merely appease, but fully satisfy, the hunger of five thousand men: They did all eat, and were filled, and Jesus " said unto his Disciples, " gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Independent of this earth, and of all its produce,—He, who is the Sovereign Lord of the Universe, did not disdain to enjoin his Disciples to gather up the fragments of that feast, which his Supreme power had instantaneously created, and could at pleasure renew; nor, should the reason assigned escape our most serious regard, " that nothing be lost." It is then his pleasure, to whom " the world and its fulness belongeth," that every one should apply the gifts He confers, to the useful purposes, for which they are intended,—it is his will, declared by a direct precept to his own Disciples, that he, who wastes any thing by profusion or neglect, shall not be guiltless. By producing this food, without the intervention of that law, which was the first judgement of God, upon fallen and sinful man, that by the " sweat of his brow, he should eat his bread," our Saviour has taught us, upon whom we are dependent for our daily subsistence, by feeding five thousand men, assembled, as we may suppose, from different quarters of the surrounding country, he hath set us an example of the most diffusive charity, and, by specially enjoining, that the

very fragments of this miraculous meal, should be carefully collected and preserved, He has given a strict lesson of frugality ; He hath demonstrated, that charity and frugality are kindred virtues, aiding and aided by each other.

This single miracle, therefore, of our Lord, furnishes us more immediately and correctly, with a summary of those duties, which the circumstances of the times call upon us to perform, than any other portion of Scripture, that has hitherto occurred to my mind. For, my brethren, whatever may be the difficulties, with which we contend, or the sufferings, we are called upon to sustain, whether they arise, as I believe, immediately from the visitation of God, or remotely, from his displeasure exercised upon us, by the agency, or, as some have suspected, by the avarice of man, still our duty is the same. From whatever source the evil proceeds, the means of meeting it, and of finally averting it, are unchangeable and defined. They are what that passage of Scripture, which I have been unfolding to you, emphatically enforces at all times ; with what additional emphasis, in times like the present, let your own consciences declare. They are,

A SUBMISSIVE ACQUIESCENCE ON THE PART OF THE LOWER RANKS, A DIFFUSIVE CHARITY ON THE PART OF THE HIGHER, A RIGID CÆCONOMY IN ALL.

On these pointed duties hear me with attention, whilst I enlarge.

And

And you, my brethren, of the lower ranks, whose narrowed powers cramp the best energies of the soul, I mean not to mock your senses, by holding up a fanciful picture of the immunities, which your station claims, of exemptions from the solicitudes, which ambitious rank creates, or from the pains and maladies generated by luxury and ease,—I mean not to extenuate your distress—I see and know, that want of clothing, and want of food, have their sufferings, as certain, as durable, and not less poignant, than the excess of either. I am not ignorant, that severe labour has it's aches and pains, as well as inert indolence. I am conscious, and I strongly feel it, may all who have the power to assist, and relieve *you, feel it with me!* that those awful chastisements of God, with which we are visited, whilst they merely check the over-flowings of affluence, embarrass your best exertions ; nay perhaps overwhelm you with difficulty and distress. But can being querulous, dissatisfied, impatient, or dejected, either alleviate your bodily wants, or calm and gratify your minds ? Will rebelling against the unfortunate circumstances, that oppress you, set you above them ? Has God, anywhere in his holy word, informed you, that to murmur against his judgements, is the best means of averting them ? On the contrary, are you not every where told, that, “ blessed are the meek,” the contented and resigned, that “ they shall inherit the earth.” Did He, who was “ the living bread ” repine, when he was required to fast forty days, and forty nights in the desert ? Did He, who “ clothes the fields with “ flowers, the world with robes, the whole globe with the canopy “ of heaven,” did he, when stript naked, murmur ? Did He, who

reaches out to the aggregate of the human race, the cup of salvation, did He dash from him, in resentment, the gall and vinegar, though offered with insult, to his lips? The only instance of perfect innocence in human form, did He rebel against that legal and established, though wicked and unjust authority, which numbered him with the transgressors? Even in that hour, when nature, convulsed by his sufferings, rent the temple, and shook the earth, when the sun, appalled by his accumulated distresses, hid himself in darkness, still the blessed Jesus, was actuated by no emotions, save those of unsubdued meekness, and of pious peace. "Father, not my will, but thine, be done," was the heaven-born sentiment that engrossed his soul. And why, to put the last stroke to a most finished picture—a picture of submission, to the Will of Him, who is Supreme,—a picture of resignation and content. Value it, or value it not, there is, ye poor distressed! there is one advantage, attached to your condition; you may follow your Saviour in this leading virtue of his character, to a perfection, which, those in happier circumstances cannot reach.—And, following it to perfection, you will possess no vulgar wealth,—a soothed and quiet heart.—A grace will gleam through your souls, with a lustre, which, the very "blackness of darkness" of fortune cannot obscure.

But if, on the contrary, you are disposed, not only to magnify the real inconveniences of your condition, but permit discontent to generate a race of frightful phantoms,—hardships which do not exist; if you either fret against God himself, or murmur against those, who, under
God,

God, are set over, for that which is good,—because their laws do not, whereas, perhaps, they cannot relieve you; can I then promise you inward peace, to oppose to outward suffering? Your own folly will aggravate the very evils you wish to redress. For, your impatience will act upon your evils, your evils upon your impatience, 'till your mind will become the seat of turbulence and disorder. Instead of calmly applying itself, with an increased attention, to the pursuit of your calling, it may be driven to confusion and despair; may push you on, to seize, by disgraceful violence, what, industry coolly exerted, might have honourably acquired; and, what is the most important consideration, will not only unfit you, for supplicating God's mercy, in the relief of your necessities, but render you, more and more, the objects of his correction.

I do not pretend to say, that there may not be some, amongst your fellow-subjects, who, whilst they merit the contempt of all, are entitled, in some degree, to your resentment. Though I know of none, I do not say, that there are no instances, in which, avarice, ever wakeful to itself, may not have endeavoured to increase your present pressures. But, granting this to be the case, granting that such persons, and such crimes exist, and, that they strongly call for punishment; still, this cannot justify the LAWLESS hand, in an attempt to punish them. This were, in every sense, to produce the greater evil, to correct the less. The very greediness of gain, which induces the selfish man to fill his storehouses with abundance, whilst other repositories stand distinguished

guished only by defect, will, you may rely upon it, not fail in its uniform influence upon his heart. He will, therefore, in due time, deal out to you, and probably to your increased wants, those hoards, which, the very attempt to seize, by unlawful means, would be sure to destroy. Here rests the imprudence of a conduct, to which I should not, in this place, have adverted, could I have forgot what has so recently disgraced different parts of our land.—Here rests it's IMPRUDENCE,—It's GUILT ranks in a much higher scale. It begins with injustice, it may end with murder. The multitude, once summoned, if it is even for the most trivial purpose, vehemence is sure to ensue. It is easy to rouse the mind, it is difficult to say, when it may subside. Therefore those, who begin, with the most moderate, even, if possible, with innocent intentions, may soon be embarrassed by the wicked views of others, nay, may forget themselves, and be led to actions, at which, their very soul starts with horror. But alas ! it is too late to recede ; they have created a storm,—they are left to perish with it, and, awful crime ! it sweeps off, perhaps, thousands, who are innocent and un-offending, with them.

Impressed with this representation, too often realized in the history of the world, to be deemed impossible, be it your study and determination, my brethren, ever "to be quiet, and to mind," only, "your own "business." Should there be some, and we trust there are few,—very few in comparison of the number, who sincerely commiserate

are anxious to relieve your distress,—But should there be some merciless men, who permit a regard for their own profit, to render them unmindful of your wants; yet, suffer not *their* wickedness, to rob you of *your* best, your almost only treasure,—a harmless and inoffensive heart. Leave them to the judgement of that God, to whose will, whether merciful or afflictive, it is your happiness, that you patiently stoop down and obey. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” saith the Lord,” and every where in Scripture, against him who, “devours widows houses,” and “grinds the face of the poor,” is denounced the severest vengeance, which Omnipotence itself has in store.

But it is not to the lower ranks only, that the miracle of my text, as it applies to times, in which, almost every passing day, displays in some striking event, the interference of the hand of God.—It is not to the lower ranks only, that it affords instruction. Ill would it suit with the duties of the higher, to behold their poor brethren, oppressed, but submissive, in want, but patient and resigned, labouring day by day for a scanty subsistence, but unable to obtain a portion, adequate to the restoration of their exhausted strength, struggling with difficulty, till worn out spirits sink into depression and disease.—Ill would it become the higher ranks, to look on, in such times, with indifference, not to devote their whole exertions, to dedicate a liberal share of their wealth, to the relief of such necessity and distress.

In prosperous days, when peace and plenty smile around us, when the sons of misfortune are few, when want is banished, into the unattractive haunts of idleness and vice, the man in easy circumstances, may see so much happiness around him, as almost to forget, that he is more blessed by Providence, than his poorer neighbour. But in days, like the present, he, whose affluence places him above those difficulties, with which he sees many, as deserving as himself, struggling hard, and by which, some are almost hourly overcome, can have few of those sentiments, which enoble the human soul, if he feels not the most impressive gratitude to that God, who has so distinguished him ; if he proves not that gratitude, by a liberal and diffusive charity to man.

You then, my brethren, who are called upon, to be thus thankful, to the all-wise Dispenser of every fortune, for the preference of station you enjoy, need I attract your attention, to that union of industry and indigence, alas ! so common, so calculated to excite pity, to provoke relief ? Need I draw your attention to a case too frequent, if you are not sinfully absorbed in selfishness, to have escaped your observation,—that of the poor man, whose daily labour, after the utmost he can do, is not equal to the expence of daily bread for him, and his family ? Can you conceive to yourselves, a case more pitiable, than that of the parent, who, after having toiled the live-long day in hardship ; instead of returning to the homely, but placid, seat of rest, returns, to have his mind harrowed up with pains, compared to which, the most wearisome of bodily fatigues, are ease and pleasure,—the cravings

cravings of an infant race, added to the silent and uncomplaining hunger of a sympathizing partner in distress,—all of which, it is denied, to the utmost exertion of his strength, to satisfy? The tear of compassion, may well start in your eye, to cloud this scene of sorrow. Think not, that by contributing liberally to relieve it, your substance will actually suffer diminution, or decrease. Like the loaves and fishes, in the hand of your Saviour, it will grow under the distribution, and enrich you, with a more plentiful remainder. At least, of this you are sure, you will “lay up for yourselves, a treasure, where rust and “moth doth not corrupt,” where, as soon may a “camel pass through “the eye of a needle, as a rich man,” whose confidence is in riches, “enter,”—where, if you can be said to have secured a possession, there alone you must secure it. For to you, who relieve the distressed, and to the distressed, who are relieved by you, life is the same fleeting shadow. To borrow the impressive language, of a distinguished prelate,*—“It is a torrent, that rolls away. The past, is no more, than “than a dream. The present, when you think you have fast hold of “it, slips through your hands, and mingles with the past. Do not “imagine, that the future will be of another quality. It will glide by, “with the same rapidity. You have seen the waves of the ocean, “pressing each other to the shore. You then beheld an emblem of “this your life. So crowd forward, days, months, and years. Yet a “little while, yet a few moments, and all will be at an end.” Little will it then avail, whether one, or a thousand acres, replenished your barns,

*DR. HORNE.

C

barns, with their annual fruits of increase. Your souls will be required of you, and whether naked and destitute, they intreat, the "mountains" "to fall" on them, and the "hills to cover" them, or, whether they appear clothed, in the glorious attire of righteousness and peace, will be the single distinction, the only concern.

But farther, and lastly, the injunction, with which, our Saviour closes the miracle of my text, has an aptitude to our present times, which applies itself to ALL,—to those of few and precarious means, by necessity, to those of more easy circumstances, by prudence, to those of affluent possessions, by charity.

He, who was not only all-sufficient in himself, but all powerful in the aid and support of others. He, who was the sole fountain, that could never cease to flow, the sole owner of an abundance, which, neither time, nor numbers, could exhaust.—Even He, at the very moment, that an astonished multitude, of five thousand men, had drawn a bountiful repast, from his undiminished store.—Even He,—to prove, that the greatest plenty, is no plea for waste—inculcates, in the midst of a miraculous profusion, a maxim of œconomy: "Gather up," says He, "the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." A maxim, to which every man, whatever may be his station; in times like ours, is bound to attend.

For those, of narrower means, indeed, to deny themselves, that sustenance, or comfort, which is reasonably within their power, and which their real, and natural wants demand, were neither virtuous, nor wise; yet,

yet, to make poor circumstances, still poorer, by some idle gratification, by some passion for diversion, by some pride of a silly distinction, is in every sense wrong. To rob their families of necessaries, by an indulgence, in a habit, which, whilst by a mere temporary flash of spirits, it seems to recruit the strength, undermines the constitution, and destroys the morals, is sinful in a superlative degree. And let them remember, that no one is bound, any more to restore, what their imprudence and vice has wasted, than, to give, what their diligence and frugality, might have supplied.

Upon you, then, my Brethren, who are looking up to those above you, with a claim, to which, I trust, they are ready to listen, and the justice of which, they are willing to allow,—Upon you, it is incumbent before you solicit that duty, which you think is due to you, from your superiors, to enquire solemnly, whether you have performed the duties, which you owe to yourselves. Whether you have been sedulous and unremitting, in earning an honest livelihood; whether you have been economical and considerate, in the application of what you have earned. Above all, ask your consciences, and hear their reply, with as much awful attention, as if it was given, as it one day must be, at the tribunal of God, whether you never expend, upon a baneful potion, what, might be the means of food and clothing,—whether, you never indulge, in a vicious excess, whilst your children are crying for bread? If you do, you cannot be an object of regard, to your superiors, you cannot be an object of friendship to your virtuous equals;—A curse, upon the tongue of your offspring, would not become it; but blessing, natural as it is, you cannot expect. You

entail upon THEM misery, disease, and an early death. By a poison of your own administering, you sink YOURSELF into an untimely grave. May you find that mercy in heaven, all claim to which, your misconduct has forfeited, on earth!

To be uniformly sparing, and never to spend to-day, because the means happen to be in their power, what by a wise, nay, I will call it a pious providence, might supply the necessities of to-morrow, (a practice, I fear, too common) is the extent of the precept of œconomy, as it relates to the poor, and in this extent, it is a virtue, of the very first consideration,—due to God,—due to society, and due to themselves. I cannot too strongly press it upon the conscience.

With those, in the ranks immediately above them, prudence will carry the precept farther. By them, some convenience must be abridged, some pleasure must be abandoned, some expence must be curtailed, or the mere extraordinary demands for necessaries, at their present advanced price, must soon sink them into the lowest class. These I commit to the charge of worldly wisdom. It is proper, however, in this place, to remark, that in addition to every other act of self-denial, which prudence may require, parsimony in that article, which is emphatically in scripture, denominated, “the staff of life,” is become a religious duty. Necessary as this article is, to the support and re-animation of nature, in all her indispensable functions; to be entirely in want of it, must be, as great a temporal evil, as the human mind can well

apprehend. It is this evil, with which the visitation of God, in two successively unfruitful seasons, has threatened us.—It is this evil, which a restricted and moderated consumption, early and generally adopted, it is hoped may avert. Parsimony, therefore, in that inestimable article, and in every thing connected with it, is, in this light, an **UNIVERSAL CHARITY**,—is, perhaps, the only act of charity, which you, who are barely raised into independent circumstances, can at present practice ; and being the only one, it must be more, and not less, criminal, to overlook it.

But, with you of the higher ranks, to whom affluence daily furnishes an abundance, which is almost inseparable from waste, the precept of œconomy, on which I am enlarging, spreads itself into a wide field indeed. You are not only bound to spare, that, if possible, none may want ; but to deal out your superfluities, that some may abound.

We do not mean, that there are not many distinctions, attached to rank, proper and necessary, and, which are so essential to the welfare of community, that they should, at all times, and in all circumstances, be kept up. We do not mean, that there is not a style of living, as indispensable, for the good order of society, and as well defined, for the higher ranks, as for the lower. We do not mean, that there are not connected with affluence, many pursuits and gratifications, which, it is for the good of the labourer and mechanic, should be indulged, and, to abandon which, would be to add to the difficulties, we wish to remove. But, my brethren, there are restraints and arrangements, in domestic œconomy,

œconomy, which, in the present exigencies of my country, I do not think it beneath the dignity of this place, to recommend; which are so necessary, not only for the comfort of the poor, but, perhaps, to keep the very bands of society together, that, I am sure, the shortest reflection, will not permit you to think yourselves innocent, if you dispense with them.

In plentiful times, when the multiplying hand of God, is fertile, to indulge in the free enjoyment of the bounties, he has given us, so far as is compatible with the health of our bodies, and the soundness of our minds, is certainty not inconsistent with gratitude to Him, and may be inoffensive to our brethren. But when, as at present, every excess of ours, must be derived out of another's want, it cannot require much argument, to press moderation, or even abstinence, upon the benevolent mind. For, think you, you will be loser, by sitting down to a less profuse, or less expensive table; if, when you rise up, "the ear" of the poor that "hears you, blefs you"? Will you be less easy, with an appeased, than a satiated appetite; if "the eye" of the poor, when it "sees you, bear witness to you?" Will "the blessing of him, "who was ready to perish," be no compensation, on the score of pleasure, for the want of the sumptuous and wasteful entertainment? Will all the variety of diversions and amusements, be unprofitably exchanged, for the affecting, but simple, concert of "the widow's heart, that sings "for joy?" Believe it not! There is a pleasure in relieving individual

vidual distress, which no gratification of sense can equal; how far that pleasure may be heightened, when the distress you are to relieve, is general, I leave to your own feelings to decide.

But, if an unnecessary consumption be become "almost, if not altogether" sinful, where shall I rank the guilt, of an idle, or a wilful waste? Can it be beneath the notice, even of the most affluent,—of him, to whom this waste, may be of the most trivial concern,—can it be beneath his notice, to make such domestic arrangements, as shall prevent any thing, but the merest crumbs, from falling from his table, and* shall direct, even those crumbs, into some channel, for the relief of the poor,—can it be beneath his notice? He, of all men, is the most concerned, with the duty, and must be, the most amenable to the guilt of neglecting it.

I doubt not, but many, if not all, who hear me, and are in a station, to admit of these arrangements, have made them, before this opportunity of urging their necessity, has occurred. It will, however, be but of inadequate avail, that they are made, unless a strict, and daily attention be paid to their execution, and by those more especially, to whom their execution must be immediately committed.

† That servants, should not pay obedience to their masters, in every thing, that is lawful, is directly contrary to a plain, and most positive

precept

* See the fourth Resolution, in the Appendix.

† See the third Resolution.

of St. Paul. That Apostle says, and often repeats it, "servants obey your masters in all things." That there might be some acts of servitude, that might not be congenial to the common sentiments of nature, but which, notwithstanding, they were bound to perform, the Apostle could easily foresee; but that they should oppose those injunctions, or—what is of equal, if not of worse effect, by sinister and secret means, render them abortive, which are to diffuse good, which can have no object, but eminent charity, and disinterested virtue, and which cannot, in any point of view, interfere, either with their pleasure, or their profits, was, I may venture to assert, a degree of wickedness, to which, he did not suppose, the human character would dare to aspire. I trust, there are few so abandoned, as to be so wicked. But, if there are any, I would have them recollect, that though, at present, they are less affected, than any class of society, by those scourges, [with which it has pleased God to afflict our land; yet he, who has sent public, has private judgements in store, and their "mountain stands "not so strong," as to be out of the reach of them. It MAY be his will to punish their hardness of heart,—their want of feeling for that distress, to the relief of which, * a poor pittance of trouble, or of time, was, perhaps, all they were required to contribute,—It MAY be his will, to punish their wickedness in this world,—It MAY be his will, that they should descend into that state of hunger and nakedness, which they have refused to pity. Let them recollect, that they are but one remove from it. It is not impossible, but this very sin, may

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* See the fourth resolution, in the appendix.

consign them to it ; but if not, sickness is a ready engine, in the hand of God, and may easily produce it. At any rate, the day is not distant, when all things shall be brought to judgement, and it becomes them, at least, to reflect, whether, if instead of being humble, and sensible of their dependent state, they have been thoughtless and insolent ; if, instead of being frugal and circumspect, they have been careless and extravagant ; if, instead of being honest to their master's interest, they have been regardless of it themselves, and have encouraged others to injure it ; if, instead of being willing and attentive, they have been remiss and indolent ; if, instead of being sober and chaste, they have been given to licentiousness and excess,—Let them seriously reflect, and ask themselves, with trembling dread, whether they can ever hope to hear that joyful salutation, applied to them,—“ Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler of many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Thus have I, my brethren, endeavoured, at a length, which supplicates your indulgence, to bring to your consideration, those duties, different indeed in different ranks, but which require an unanimity in practice, if we would, with firmness, and with virtue, meet the exigencies of the day. I only add, that so to meet them, is not merely the surest way of softening our sufferings, but of procuring our release. For, if all the visitations of God are intended, as both reason and scripture assure us they are, for the improvement of our virtue, or the correction of our vice.—Then, to turn our murmurings and complaints, into

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resignation and submission, our pride, and forgetfulness of God, into humility, and a sense of our dependence upon Him, our folly and extravagance, into prudence and circumspection, our luxuries and excesses, into temperance and charity; is to invoke a return of that protection and favor, which, we may reasonably hope, mercy and forgiveness will not deny. Let each of us, then, as if the load which oppresses the whole, was to be removed by our single and unassisted strength,—let each of us, put our hand freely to the work, and, whilst we entreat and supplicate the great Husbandman, that our “ wilderness “ may,” again “ be converted into a fruitful field,”—that our desert may again “ blossom, as the rose,”—let us not forget to implore, the aid of his grace, in the cultivation of the unprofitable soil of our hearts, that he may water them, with the heavenly dew of firm faith, and peaceful mercy, that he may weed out of them “ the thorns and briars that choke the good seed,” that so, they may produce a fair and plenteous harvest of piety and good works here, and we may find our reward, “ some thirty, some fifty, some a hundred fold,” in an eternal kingdom.

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